The Congregationalist

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IN THE LAND OF THE SIOUX.

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THE CONGREGATIONAL WAY.

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VOLUME 3 MARCH, 1960 NUMBER 3

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

Missionary Society Directors Meet

The Board of Directors of the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches of the United States met in Milwaukee on January 27-28, in a joint session with the National Association Commission on Missions.

Among the high points of the meeting was the approval of the acquisition of a site for a new church building in West Bloomfield Township, Michigan. The tract is in an attractive, rapidly growing area twenty miles northwest from downtown Detroit. This has great promise for a growing Church. Continuing Congregationalists are urged to give it substantial support. It is expected that a Church School and worship services will begin within a year, probably in a nearby school building.

Around the World

Our Missionary Society now supports work around the world. Reports of progress of the 10,000 Congregational people in South India brought rejoicing to the meeting. The Travancore Churches are carrying on in spite of harassment from the Church of South India. They, like many other former colonial people, wish to be treated as free and equal. Above all they wish to maintain the tradition which Congregational missions in the past had taught them.

This is true also of the Christian friends whom we are helping in Hong Kong and Formosa. These are Chinese Christians who have "voted for freedom with their feet" by leaving the Communist mainland. To them the ecumenical movement is "the white man's yoke."

Here in America Piedmont College continues to be a matter close to the hearts of all of us. The Missionary Society hopes that member-Churches and individuals will contribute the $5,000.00 needed to furnish the new men's dormitory. A work camp for young people will be held here again next summer.

In the 49th State

Our 49th state, Alaska, came in for considerable discussion. The work among the Indians in Metlakatla is progressing and has grown to the extent that they now need a Director of Religious Education. Dr. and Mrs. Howell D. Davies will visit there next summer and go on to Anchorage, "The Chicago Of The North," with a view to establishing a new Church there.

Extension work in Granada Hills and in Anaheim, California, and in Toledo and North Royalton, Ohio, continues. In three of these projects they are looking forward to an enlargement of their facilities.

The Financial Report

Receipts of the Missionary Society for 1959 were $94,000.00, of which $40,000.00 was undesignated. An operating budget of $50,000.00 is projected for 1960. It must be borne in mind that every dollar sent to this Society is sent on to the field. All expenses, even the least, are paid by the National Association. We believe this is a new principle in missionary work and will in time be adopted among all denominations. It is not proper to label as "missionary" the huge expenses on overhead administration and world ecumenical conferences.

Dr. John D. Rose of Lathrup Village, Michigan, was elected president, Mrs. Elizabeth Barg of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, vice president, and Dr. Howell D. Davies of Chicago, secretary-treasurer. Dr. Rose succeeds Dr. Max Strang of Marshalltown, Iowa, as chairman of the Commission on Missions.

Publication Commission Meets

Five members of the Commission on Publications of the National Association met at Milwaukee on January 27-28 in connection with the meetings of other Commissions. Most of the business was concerned with details regarding THE CONGREGATIONALIST and other regular publications. Several new projects were nevertheless considered.

In view of the request for devotional material, especially for Lent and Advent, the subject was carefully explored. It was voted that the Chairman of the Commission should write to a well-known retired minister to ask him to work out some undated material which can be used to encourage serious studying of the Scriptures and their relation to everyday life. Further announcement regarding this will appear in a future issue of THE CONGREGATIONALIST.

Among other items which were given consideration at this meeting were: the publication of "The Congregational Way," by Rev. Arthur A. Rouner, Jr., prize winning entry in the Savoy Tercentenary Contest of 1958; the republishing of certain great Congregational classics, including famous sermons by ministers of the past and books about the history and meaning of Congregationalism, and various leaflets and calendar inserts for our Churches, suitable for use at such times as Pentecost, World Wide Communion, Thanksgiving Sunday and a "Patriotic Sunday" between Lincoln's and Washington's Birthdays.

Members of the Commission present were: Dr. Henry David Gray, Hartford, Connecticut, Chairman; Miss Evelyn H. Bumgarner, Lansing, Michigan, Secretary; Mrs. Robert K. Richardson, Beloit, Wisconsin; Dr. Arvel M. Steece, Old Saybrook, Connecticut, and the Editor of THE CONGREGATIONALIST.

OUR COVER PICTURE

The familiar picture of Pilgrims at worship on board the Mayflower is a part of the mural decoration on the first floor of the Bible House, New York City. It is reproduced by permission of the American Bible Society.

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THE DUTY OF ASSOCIATION

Rev. A. Vaughan Abercrombie,
Tacoma, Washington

(Reprinted by permission of the author from THE WASHINGTON CONGREGATIONAL WAY, Seattle, October 1959.)

The word *association* in Congregational Christian history has not been merely a noun meaning an organization, but more fundamentally, it has been a noun-verb standing for a deliberately dynamic and on-going fellowship of the Churches and ministers of a given "vicinage." Hence the historic phrase, "the duty of association" has been held equally important to "the right of autonomy" in classic definitions of congregationalism.

It is in order, whenever associations meet, for us to reflect on the place dynamic fellowship must play in the life of our free Churches, if they are to rise above ingrown independency. Where others rely on bishops, presbyteries, canon laws and mystical successions to create catholicity and maintain ecclesiastical order, we have deliberately chosen to let "association in Christ" be both the guiding principle of our common life and the structure of our cooperative activity.

Whatever organizational techniques we may have come to use, these are always secondary to *association,* and are justifiable only insofar as they help to create fellowship and maintain service "to the glory of God." Standing committees, elected officers, paid secretaries, and *ad hoc* ecclesiastical councils are tools which the Churches of the vicinage have found useful in expediting the demands of the duty of association.

As in local Churches, so also in associations of Churches and ministers, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst." The presence of the Spirit of the Lord is our joy, and our assurance that all things shall be done "decently and in order." But the initiative for gathering together and working together for His glory must arise in us as a sacred duty.

DIVERSITIES IN THE CHURCH

"There will always be diversities in the church. It will never be possible to attain complete uniformity of thought or in forms of worship or in ways of interpreting religious history, nor is that desirable. There are characteristic varieties of mental type. Our outlooks are different. Our needs are different. Our range of thought and experience is different. We should as individuals belong, if possible, to a religious group, a spiritual family, that best fits our needs and aptitudes. We should not all be fused and merged into one uniform mold in one vast structure. We should have our denominational names and we should worship where we find ourselves in most sympathetic accord with others.

"But our narrow *isms* should vanish. Our sectarian spirit should die out. Our rivalries and jealousies should cease. And we should all contribute to the one growing, expanding, Church of the Spirit, which is being builded through the ages for a habitation of God."

(From "Faith and Practice of the Quakers," by Rufus M. Jones, quoted in "Rufus Jones Speaks To Our Time," by Harry Emerson Fosdick. Reprinted here by permission of the MacMillan Company, which holds the copyright.)

NEWS NOTES

Bell Choir at Marshalltown. The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa, has announced the ordering of hand bells from England for the formation of a Boys' Bell Choir. Delivery requires two years, but in the meantime applications for membership in the choir are being received, and training given in bell ringing techniques and bell choir music.

Granada Hills Church Meets in School. The Church of Our Saviour, Congregational, of Granada Hills, California, is now meeting in the Tulsa Street School Auditorium, pending the completion of its new home on Rinaldi Street.

Culled from Annual Meeting Reports. January is the time for many annual meetings, and the following highlights from reports of these meetings have been culled by the editor. Eaton Rapids, Michigan, shows an 18% membership increase for the year, compared with an average state increase of 1%. Tarentum, Pennsylvania, reports such an increase in church school attendance that the pastor has urged the church to consider erecting a parish hall between the church building and the parsonage. As other reports come to his attention, the editor will be glad to draw from them for notes in future issues.

Meeting at New Haven, Michigan. On January 17 a meeting of members from the Congregational Churches at Armada, Memphis, and New Haven, Michigan, met in the latter town. Rev. Mrs. Lucia Stroh led the devotional service, with prayer by Rev. F. S. Phipps of Memphis. The speaker was Professor George V. Bohman of Royal Oak. A Question Period followed his address.

"One Great Hour" Envelopes. Envelopes for the "One Great Hour of Sharing," bearing the name of the National Association, may be obtained from Rev. Neil H. Swanson, Jr., 176 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin.

Pastoral Changes. Bethlehem Congregational Church of Duquesne, Pennsylvania, has called Rev. Sherwood C. Keiser of McDonald, Pennsylvania, to its pastorate, and the churches at Spring Creek and West Spring Creek, Pennsylvania, have called Rev. Robert Pier. Mr. Charles H. Hall, pastor of the Oxford County United Parish, Maine, has accepted a call to the churches at East Machias and Machiasport.

New Member Church. Pilgrim Congregational Church of Plymouth, Pennsylvania, has recently enrolled as a member of the National Association.

Michigan Church Votes Against Merger. According to a news report in the Benton Harbor *News Palladium* for January 25, the Congregational Church at Bridgman, Michigan, voted unanimously not to join the proposed United Church of Christ.

Regarding the Lawsuit. Conferences are being held and pre-trial papers prepared in the suit entered in 1957 in the Federal Court for the Southern District of New York in which four Congregational Churches and ten members have asked for a declaratory judgment regarding the Basis of Union and Interpretations for the proposed union with the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

In the Land of the Sioux

A Brief History of the First Congregational Church of Zumbrota, Minnesota

(Prize winning entry in the Educational Project of the National Association, by Mr. Clarence Stearns, Grand Marais, Minnesota.)

This story starts with the Puritans who, like the Pilgrims carried their guns to the fields and to church as protection against the Indians, those people who at times may have been narrow and superstitious but who broadened and helped establish such schools as Harvard and Yale.

While most of them and their descendants stuck closely to the rock bound coast or the stony fields of New England there were adventurous souls with some of the impulses of their forefathers who saw the approaching growth of our nation and succumbed to the western fever. My father was one of them.

And so this is the story of a Church, a Congregational Church, transplanted, firm convictions, architecture and all to a place known on the maps at the time only as "The Land of the Sioux Indians."

Scouts sent out in 1855 discovered the rich and beautiful Zumbro Valley in southeastern Minnesota. The following year these hardy bearded pioneers, honest and religious, braved the Indians and the other uncertainties and built a New England village in the west. They named it Zumbrota and it is the only Zumbrota in the world. The village was laid out in an orderly manner with a block reserved for the church, another for a park and a suitable site for a school.

Devotion Amid Privations

Their first winter resembled the first winters of the Puritans. It was hard and bleak and cold and they snuggled close to the fireplace where the meals were cooked. They slept on straw mattresses on the floor or placed on "rope bedsteads" where criss-crossed rope took the place of springs — but they were laying plans for the church.

They built the church, colonial architecture so beautiful that nearly a century later Sinclair Lewis, passing by, stopped to inquire and ask how the poor people of that time could have funds for such a building.

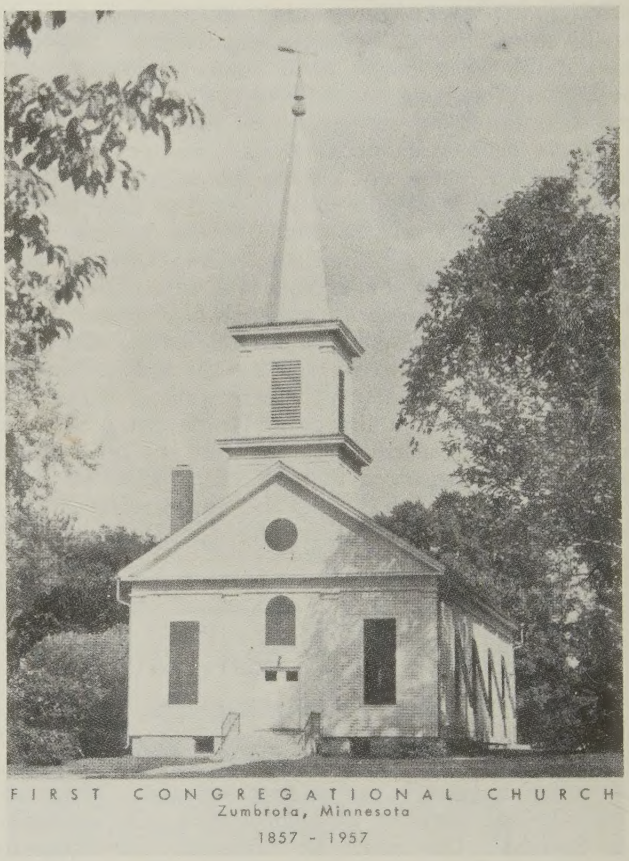
They were poor people. There was little wheat to sell for several years and in 1860, with an average yield of about one hundred and fifty bushels for each farm, the price was 45¢ a bushel at the nearest market twenty miles away.

They were, however, persistent and courageous and with great faith they sent one of their members back East to solicit funds and as proof of Congregational fellowship he returned with enough for a good start.

The lumber was hauled from the nearest saw-mill by teams of oxen and each trip took two days. There were no bridges and the roads were little more than trails.

One member of the Church had a stone quarry and donated the stone for the foundation. Others became carpenters, stone masons or mechanics. A Detroit hardware firm donated the stovepipe and a donation of fifty hymn books came from John Willard of New York. Ten books were reserved for the choir and the others were distributed to those who made a twenty-five cent donation.

The ladies, not so much heard of in those days, played a large part and in a few years they had earned enough to purchase a bell with a beautiful tone. The cost was $640.00 and weighing 1,202 pounds it was hauled overland by three teams of oxen. Oxen were also on hand to hoist the bell to its resting place but the men felt that human hands should do the job so they grabbed the rope and performed the ceremonial task. To this day from the steeple it calls the people to worship.



Those Early Sundays

In those early days, on a Sunday morning, when the first bell rang at nine o'clock all around the valley farmers were hitching up their teams and with the preparation of a Saturday night bath the family, all primped up, climbed aboard the wagons. There was an unloading at the "horse blocks" and the teams were driven to the barns back of the church where they rested to the distant strains of music but gave no thought to the sermon.

The sermons were long and one of my first memories is of laying my head in my mother's lap and going to sleep in one of the front pews. Nor was I alone for some of the elders, on a hot Sunday, would nod their heads undisturbed unless the beginning of a snore called for a good solid nudge from his nearest companion.

It is remarkable how minutely the church records have been kept and how safely preserved. The first, written with a quill pen, gave way to the fine Spencerian hand of a man who was the clerk for many years. I think they recorded in more detail than now some of the things that happened. For instance, I discovered with some glee that an early minister had called my father, then the treasurer of the church, "a thief and a liar." Father took exception and called the deacons and trustees to meeting to act as a jury. The jury decided the minister should retract his words and apologize. The minister said he would apologize but not retract. For better or for worse there was soon a change of pastors.

Now speaking of ministers, I think that in recording history we should include the "bitter with the sweet" and it has been said that there are some poor apples in every barrel.

Considering that the Church has had some thirty-four ministers it is not so surprising that one eked out his small income by selling stock in a worthless salt well in Wyoming. Perhaps he had faith. Another signed numerous notes for loans from members and departed between two days. That was probably a matter of expediency. As for the minister who tried to "stuff the ballot" in a meeting deciding whether he should stay or try another field and was caught in the act by one of his friendly deacons, that must have been just stupidity.

The Better Side

It is good that ministers are very human beings and to greatly overbalance the few who may have deviated and are forgiven there are the many who served with faith, consecration and sacrifice. Let me just mention one of these who has gone to a better world; an author of numerous books bearing on religion he rated nearly a column in "Who's Who in America." He preached his fine sermons without notes and did not read his prayers. Never owning an automobile he gave all of his children a college education and donated so much of his salary to the church that I once wrote his son, also a Congregational minister, asking if we should accept a special contribution. The answer in brief, "He has always done that."

The first musical instrument in the church was a melodeon and was followed by a reed organ, then came the time in 1885 when we were able to purchase, second hand, a very fine and imposing pipe organ which with some modern improvements continues to serve and serve well.

The candles in the church gave way to kerosene lamps (six on each chandelier) and they, of course, gave way to electricity. The stoves were replaced by a furnace in the basement. Always the colonial atmosphere has been preserved.

Let us mention just two of those who have gone out from this church to serve the Lord.

The Rev. James Walker served in the home-missionary field and for years supervised the work in the three then primitive states of Colorado, Montana and Wyoming. Traveling on horseback where there were no roads or with a team of broncos hitched to a buckboard, with his wife often at his side, he lived to see his son serving as a Congregational minister.

Then there was Emily S. Hartwell, a member of the church for more than three score years. Born in China of Missionary parents she received her early education in Zumbrota, then at Mt. Holyoke. A woman with remarkable energy, vision and understanding she served the church in Foo Chow, China, for many years and was decorated by the Chinese Government under Sun Yat-Sen.

The church has weathered many a storm, at times deeply in debt and the members despondent, but the brave continued the good battle and better times have come again.

Recently a twenty thousand dollar improvement project was taken care of during one decade and at the church's 100th anniversary I witnessed the burning of the mortgage and heard them sing

ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.

Congregational Bookshelf

"The Quest For Church Unity"

The Macmillan Company has done a notable service by publishing Professor Matthew Spinka's book "The Quest for Church Unity." (85 pages, $2.50)

In eighty-five well written pages Dr. Spinka packs a wealth of history, a careful evaluation of the present predicament of the Christian Churches, an objective analysis of trends in theology and polity, and a thought-provoking "reasonable unity." Dr. Spinka points out that One Christian Church, in the organizational meaning, is not possible, since the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and many other Churches do not recognize the validity of sister Churches. Even one organized Protestant Church is not presently possible without discarding the distinctive witness of bodies like the Episcopal, Baptist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches. In fact, the organizational unification of episcopal, presbyterian and congregational forms of government cannot be accomplished except by destroying two of the three polities.

The *realistic* goal for Church unity is *not* One Big Church organization; it is a federation of *Churches*, each of which recognizes all other Churches as spiritually united in one Church of Christ. Dr. Spinka suggests that the term "ecumenical" is unrealistic and inaccurate. He "chooses the limited possible as against the unlimited impossible."

As essentials for spiritual unity he lists acceptance of Jesus Christ as supreme revelation of God, recognition of the Scriptural witness of that revelation, and agreement on the reality and power of the Holy Spirit at work in individuals and in the Christian communities.

He says, "As a spiritual entity, as the Body of Christ, the Church is necessarily one. It is not an organization but a living organism. Accordingly, fellowship, communion of saints, (and) a sense of oneness of believers are the primary unifying means the Church possesses . . . (Church) order is not enforced obedience to external authority, but free unity of believers . . . If choice must be made between unity and freedom, then let us choose freedom, for a Church lacking in freedom is not a true Church. . . . The Church is freedom limited by love . . . and love cannot be . . . externally imposed."

"The unity movement must have for its first objective making the mind of Christ regnant within all Christians." Congregational, Presbyterian and Episcopal polities "must be recognized as permanently valuable . . . They cannot be . . . homogenized." "The aim I would stress (is) 'diversity in unity,' not uniformity. Real unity is a spiritual entity, not an external organization."

WOMEN'S WORK

MRS. ROBERT E. COLLINS, Chairman
1014 FLORAL DRIVE, S.E., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Commission Plans for 1960

Coming together from widely scattered areas, the Commission on Women's Work met in Milwaukee for two days in late January to organize its work for the year. Mrs. Robert E. Collins (Mayflower-Grand Rapids) is the new chairman, and Mrs. William Schmitz (Allegan, Michigan) is secretary.

Initial plans were drafted for the Women's Seminars at the Annual Meeting this fall, to include the presentation of a short play: "Program Chairman? Oh, No! I Can't Possibly!". The exchange of ideas in Los Angeles was of such value that there was unanimous agreement that there should be plans for maximum participation, and this original play will provide the springboard for discussion.

Program Handbook to be Re-Issued

"Stimulating Suggestions — by and for Congregational Christian Churchwomen" will undergo a revision and be re-issued as a basic, "undated" source-book of ideas for the overall program of women's groups. It will retain its emphasis on a balance of the fundamental concerns of churchwomen (*4 S Balance*): interest in the Study, Service, Spiritual, and Social needs of the individual, the group, the Church, the community, and the "wider fellowship."

It is the aim of "Stimulating Suggestions" to eliminate confusion over the responsibilities of various chairmen. Each group, however large or small, can employ its human and physical resources to develop a satisfying, well-rounded program with Christian emphasis. Announcement will be made as soon as the new issue is available.

Meanwhile a compact brochure of "Program Aids" is planned for release this spring. It will list mimeographed material, slides, recordings, etc., available at the NACCC office, and will indicate other sources of help.

Reports showing what has been done in various fellowships to revamp their organization and program in line with "Stimulating Suggestions" will appear from time to time on these pages. The April issue will carry an account of how a group in Burlington, Iowa, restyled their mission work, producing a program truly "by and for Congregational Christian Churchwomen." It is an inspiring story.

New Booklet Planned on Service Projects

As funds become available a new booklet will be printed devoted to the areas of Service. It will include suggestions for programs and projects dealing with mission work, church extension, civic and community service, service to the local Church, and the like.

Mrs. Edward Adams, 1201 East Main, Marshalltown, Iowa, will act as editor of this publication and will welcome any suggestions or information which will help to make it of greater inspiration and use to the women of our Churches. It is our hope that it may be available at the Annual Meeting of the NACCC this fall.

"Mother's Day" Suggestion Received

Mrs. John Alexander (Wauwatosa, Wisconsin) responded to the Commission's invitation to send suggestions so that we may "share our best" with the following letter:

Dear Mrs. Collins:

I have long felt that a family's observance of Mother's Day should have vital significance, and I wonder if many mothers would not agree with me that while we appreciate flowers, candy, and other gifts from our husbands and children, we would be equally, and perhaps even more, happy if our family did something with the money, in our name, that would be helpful to other children and young people less fortunate than our own.

As I have heard increasingly of the needs of Piedmont College for many improvements to enrich its vital program, I have wondered if the Women's Commission of the National Association could not work toward a "Mother's Fund for a Library at Piedmont College," just as one suggestion.

While we all resist, to some extent at least, the use of special days of appreciation for fund raising purposes, I think this is something we mothers could do. If we have 30,000 mothers in member Churches of the National Association, it is not inconceivable to me that funds for a library building could be raised in one or two years if we carefully sowed the seed in the minds of those who will remember us on Mother's Day.

I would be glad to lend whatever support I can to carrying out such an idea, if it meets with the approval of the women of the commission, and others feel that it is worth strong support on their part.

Sincerely yours,

Donna E. Alexander

Thank you, Mrs. Alexander, for writing the Commission of your idea. The Christian concern and logic which prompted your suggestion met a warm response among Commission members. They could see the possibility of giving further impetus to this worthwhile project not only on Mother's Day but on any of those occasions when mothers might be gratified to have a gift given in their honor in preference to a personal gift of fleeting value.

Readers, what do YOU think? Let us know if you feel this is a suitable way to "Remember Mama"! Your immediate favorable response will start the wheels turning to make this a Women's Commission project.

WHO HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY?

Rev. James H. Kepler, Granada Hills, California

On September 17, 1787, our United States Constitution was signed by thirty-nine American patriots. Thus was created a form of government known as a republic, a nation in which the supreme power rests in all citizens entitled to vote. It was a big day for Congregationalists. Freedom was not a new idea, but it was really a first attempt at limiting by written document, a government from interfering with the freedom of the individual, a basic Congregational principle. Not only has this form of government endured but it has grown in stature, endearing itself more and more through the years to those who care for the state or quality of being free.

The creators and signers of the Constitution were really expressing the will of the conscientious majority to bring into being an authority over their government which would serve, not master.

How Can We Be Indifferent?

Then as now, there were those who were complacent, even indifferent, about this issue, so important. As a pastor of one of the newer Churches in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, and new in a sense to the benefits of the Congregational position, I can hardly keep quiet. There is no Church now enjoying freedom which is more thrilled or satisfied or grateful than The Church of Our Saviour, Congregational, in the San Fernando Valley of Southern California. I know that in the day when our Constitution of the United States of America was drafted that there were all too few who were willing to assume the responsibilities inherent in the maintenance of freedom, but for the life of me I cannot see how Congregationalists living in this wonderful century can be complacent or indifferent. The traditional barriers then as now were those things which stood in the way of freedom. The character established was freedom. The church that met the needs of the day was the free church. Times do change but certainly men have always acknowledged freedom as an indestructible principle under God.

Our Church in the valley is rooted and grounded in the unsearchable riches of Christ, which we agree with the Apostle Paul are the creative forces of freedom and love. Our people in most cases have received these emphases with the enthusiasm of a new discovery.

Must We Learn Again?

We find it very difficult in our present state of happiness under the privilege of religious freedom to understand how Congregationalists living in our United States can believe there is no difference between a strong united church government and the individual Church rule with the local Churches in association with one another.

Experience has taught us that such a belief is false. Do we have to learn again that the meetinghouse is a better place to create and share for the local needs than are the distant impersonal assemblies, where temptations are great for men to seek power, where legislation is easier?

Recognizing the complete freedom of the individual is at the very heart of our great Congregational avenue of faith. It is the incentive to study and to show ourselves approved. It is the remaining encouragement for the thousands of unchurched who want freedom and are handed something else. Why do not the Congregationalists of America refresh their knowledge and belief by making a personal effort to learn of Christ and their Church? The responsibility lies with each Congregationalist. Never before have we needed more to arouse our individual citizens and our individual Church members to acquaint themselves with freedom, and to reaffirm their faith in it by making the right decisions.

Culled from a Church Bulletin

Concerning Security and Strength

Within recent weeks your pastor has met with several groups of ministers and theological students to discuss either the issues of church union or pastoral placement.

Concern for security has loomed large in their conversations. I suppose this is to be expected as part of the widespread mood of the times in which we live. Nonetheless, the quite evident evaluation of matters of religious conviction in terms of personal security is not healthy. One can understand the desire of a young minister to be in the good graces of denominational officials, or, to be in style with current (and passing) trends in theology or polity. But, in a world which places undue value on conformity, one is left wondering whether or not security is a substitute for strength.

Christian strength does not depend on the securities of earth; it is soul strength. Grenfell in Labrador, Livingstone in Africa, Kagawa in Japan, Laubach in the Philippines, "Dr. Mary" at Chilesso — these men and women of strength have been, one and all, notably *lacking* in the kind of securities which seem important to many today. The same can be said of homeland service; often the Dwight L. Moody, Lyman Beecher, or Mary Lyon presents a picture of small security but incredible strength.

Across the centuries the same witness is carried. Francis of Assisi, Waldo of Lyons, Woolman of America, or Hooker of Hartford were buoyed up by inner soul strength which enabled them to dare and to do fearlessly. It was not what we call *security* which made possible their mighty acts; it was *strength.*

God give us men of soul strength in this our day.

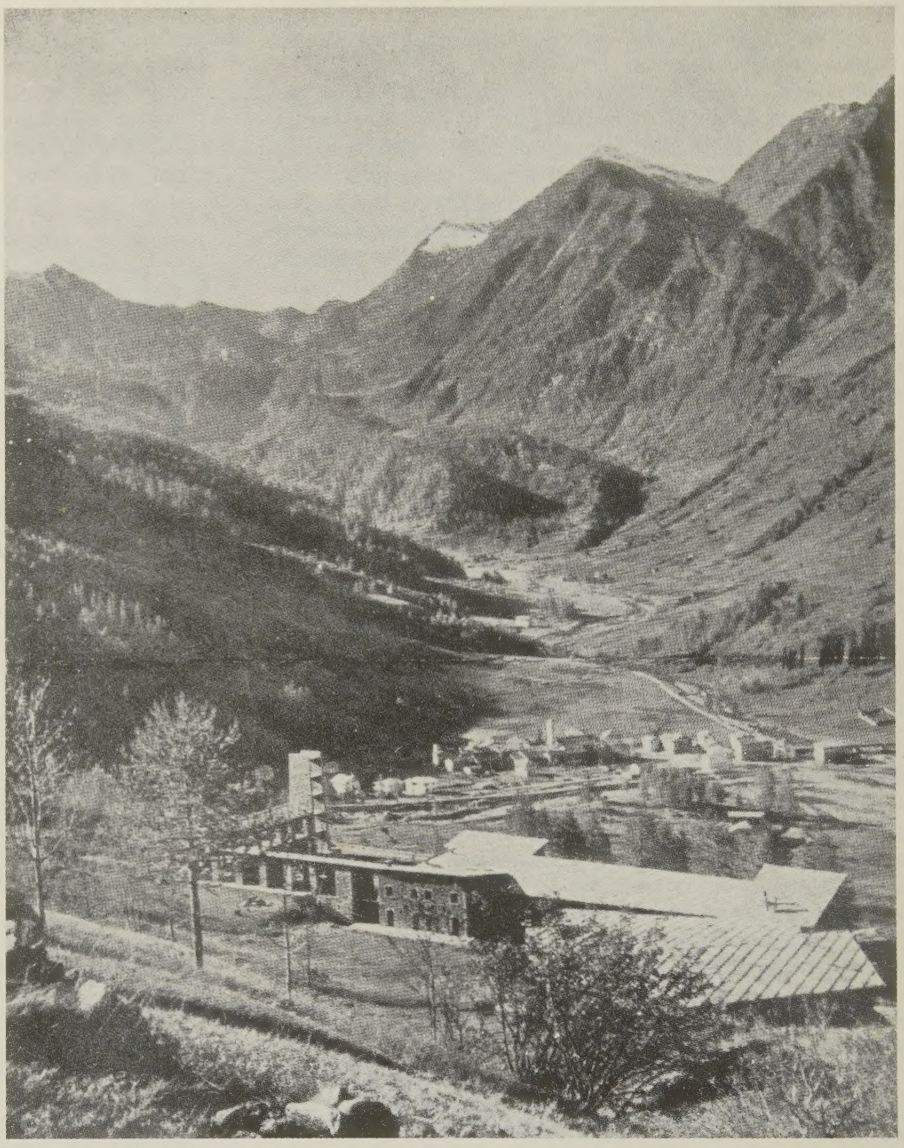
— hdg

THE ANALYSIS AND DIGEST

Since the announcement in the December CONGREGATIONALIST of the plan for an analysis and digest of the proposed Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ, numerous requests have been received for copies. The preparation of these will take some little time and it is not practicable to state at present just when they will be ready for distribution. All requests received at any office of the National Association are being kept on file and will be complied with as soon as the analysis is complete. This document will unquestionably be ready by the time the revised draft of the Constitution and By-Laws is sent to the Churches for their action.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP

Marilyn Heaney, Secretary, 1874 Lake Drive S. E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan



AGAPE 1960

Chief among the projects for the Summer of 1960 for Pilgrim Fellowship young people will be adventures in service, study, and international understanding. Groups of young people under competent leadership will visit Italy and Greece. These will not be merely "tours" for sightseeing, but will include work camps, educational opportunities, fellowship and worship with young people of many lands.

Probably not many of our American Congregational young people realize that one of the earliest Protestant movements in Europe was that of the Waldensians in the mountains of Northern Italy. It was the persecution of these bold, freedom-loving Italian Christians which prompted John Milton's famous poem "On The Late Massacre In Piedmont," in which he referred to the Waldensians as those "who kept Thy truth so pure of old, when all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones."

A party of Pilgrim Fellowship young people will spend several weeks in July and August in a work project at Camp Agape, high in the mountains above Turin, where they will meet and work with many other young people, visit Waldensian Churches, and in connection with this have opportunity to visit Turin, Genoa, Pisa, Rome and Naples.

The Director of the camp is Dr. Tullio Vinay, and Mrs. Henry David Gray, who led the 1959 "Caravan U.S.A." will be leader of the National Association group. The party will leave New York on Saturday, July 9, aboard S. S. *Olympia*, and will return about the end of August by air.

In the Footsteps Of St. Paul

The other adventure in service and study will cover Alexandroupolis, Phillipi, Galonika (Thessalonica) Athens and Corinth. The Book of Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul will "come alive" to these young Christians as they see the places where our Christian faith took root so early on European soil.

Service projects of this group in Greece will include the painting of a church building and helping to put in the floor of a mission. This party will be in charge of Miss Effie Zikas, post-graduate student in church social service. Miss Zikas is the daughter of Pastor Philotheos Zikas, President of the Greek Evangelical Union.

Further information about these opportunities for travel, education, and Christian service may be obtained from Dr. Henry David Gray, South Congregational Church, Main and Buckingham Streets, Hartford 3, Connecticut.

A Junior Pilgrim Fellowship with 32 members was organized on January 17 at Mayflower Congregational Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

At the Publications Commission meeting on January 28 it was deemed wise to confine the Pilgrim Fellowship page in THE CONGREGATIONALIST to news about P. F. work rather than to carry "Program Suggestions." It is hoped that a special quarterly bulletin of "Program Suggestions" may be prepared in the near future and sent to all our Churches.

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CULLED COMMENTS

"Congregationalism is the handmaiden of democracy . . . . It should not be submerged into a fatuous dream of ecumenicity. A noble birthright should not be exchanged for a mess of ecumenical pottage. Those who cherish the Congregational fellowship are justified in seeking to preserve it."

— Alfred Grant Walton, D.D., Pastor, Flatbush Congregational Church, Brooklyn in letter to THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY, July 3, 1957.

"We are to remove our mind as far as possible from the notion that the union we are to seek is a far distant theoretical union to be participated in by Protestantism, Romanism, and the Greek Orthodox Communion. Such a union is wholly impossible at present, and would be an intolerable curse if we could have it and should obtain it. It would result in more new sects than we have ever dreamed of."

— William E. Barton, D.D., 1930

IN MEMORIAM

Miss Clare McPhee, a former English teacher and leader in cultural work, died on January 8 in Lincoln, Nebraska. Miss McPhee was one who had loyally stood by her convictions in spite of opposition. Services were conducted on January 11 at First-Plymouth Church of Lincoln, by Rev. Walter Schilling.

Mr. Ganson Taggart, a charter member and loyal supporter of Mayflower Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, died on December 11, 1959, in that city. An invalid ever since this Church was gathered, he never had been able to attend its services, but was deeply loyal to it in every way. He was a great-grandson of the Rev. Samuel Taggart, first pastor of the Congregational Church in Colrain, Massachusetts.

PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP

(*continued from page 8*)

Activity in local Pilgrim Fellowship groups in our country goes on encouragingly. Rev. Paul Pitman of Burlington, Iowa, Chairman of the Youth Commission of the National Association, will be glad to furnish information and suggestions.

As this issue of THE CONGREGATIONALIST goes to press, the Northeast Pilgrim Fellowship is planning a midwinter rally to be held at the Florence Congregational Church, Northampton, Massachusetts, over the weekend of February 22. The invitations refer to the "Snowballing Pilgrim Fellowship" of the Florence Church. The many visitors who are expected from New England and New York will not find themselves greeted by a barrage of snowballs, however. The Fellowship at Florence is increasing in size and in momentum like a snowball!

OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

Rev. Charles C. Smith, Fall River, Massachusetts

"I was older than I should care to admit," said a friend recently, "before I realized that Lent was something more than a harbinger of Spring." For many people the significance of Lent is a nebulous thing, the issue never having been brought into sharp focus. Let us try, then, to bring it into the light of day.

Mark's gospel tells us that after Jesus' baptism the Spirit drove Him out into the wilderness where He was tempted for forty days. Here it was, out in the barren wastes of a desolate land, that Jesus formulated the plans for His ministry. Hour after hour he wrestled with His adversary and prayed; He waited and listened; He watched and hoped. Here it was, as He defeated the tempter's challenges, that the Master came into an abiding relationship with the Father. Lent, then, is a time when we, like our Lord, strive to incorporate God's plan for us into our lives. It is a time when we seek to ground our anchor firm and deep in the Saviour's love.

If in this season we are to become bound by God's far purpose, there is, as in all things worthwhile, an obligation upon us. We begin to meet this responsibility when we open our hearts and lives to Him in prayer. Spiritual maturity may be cultivated by reading selectively, we can forge ahead as the result of another person's influence on us, but only through prayer — honest, sincere prayer — can we come to know God and receive the strength and power, the wisdom and courage, the truth and the life which He has made available for us.

Prayer, however, is not just a matter of words — words shoving and fighting and scrambling their way up an invisible escalator to the throne of grace. People want to pray but sometimes feel it is necessary to dispatch their business with God as quickly as possible. In this case, prayer means talking as fast as the tongue can trip or the mind can function. Now while it is important to express verbally our praise and appreciation, while it certainly is appropriate to offer our confessions and petitions, of this one thing we can be sure. In the wilderness Jesus did not spend all of His time talking; many hours were spent in silent meditation as He listened for God's directives.

Prayer is absolute communication, therefore listening is an essential part of this vital and transforming experience. When a soul listens for the Voice of Him who was before the worlds began, new thoughts and impulses come to him, his mind is directed toward some of the great affirmations found in Holy Writ, darkness is dispelled and new hope and vision come. To some softly and tenderly, to some with stern face and straight finger, but to each man in his need God will come and God will speak.

Lent, then, is a time to evaluate the road on which we are traveling, it is a time to take inventory of our lives, it is a time to listen so that as heirs we can claim the promises of God.

"O Thou by whom we come to God —
The Life, the Truth, the Way —
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod —
Lord, teach us how to pray."

— James Montgomery

THE CONGREGATIONAL WAY

Harry E. Goodman, O.D.,
Los Angeles, California

(A Condensation of Dr. Goodman's prize-winning entry in the Educational Project of the National Association.)

Any person who has made a study of Congregationalism and followed its growth during its existence of more than three hundred years cannot help but be amazed at the turn of events during the last decade.

In comparison with other Protestant groups, Congregationalism must be considered a fellowship of Churches and not a religious denomination. It sprang from the grass roots and was an expression of freedom. It was a law unto itself and was not responsible to, or dominated by, any ecclesiastical body. Each individual Church was free to organize under its own policy, to own its own property, to discipline its own members according to its own By-Laws. This manner of living and worshiping set the basic principles which were so fundamental in the establishing of our western democracy and the drafting of our National Constitution. Many of the states followed this same pattern in the writing of their respective Constitutions.

Most Congregationalists are proud of this heritage and, believing that it is fundamental, desire no change in the policies which have prevailed for so long a time and have accomplished so much.

A Revolutionary Proposal

In 1942 a new proposal was introduced into the Congregational Christian fellowship. This idea did not originate in the grass roots but in the minds of some of its leaders and was endorsed and promoted by the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches. The suggestion was that we abandon our Free Church polity and merge with the Evangelical and Reformed (E. and R.) Church, thereby creating a new denomination to be known as the United Church of Christ.

For the last decade Congregationalism has been living in the turmoil and confusion brought about by this extreme proposal. In 1947 the General Council submitted to the separate Churches for their approval a plan of union, known as "The Basis of Union." When the votes were counted, there was not a sufficient number of favorable votes to approve the plan. However, by additional effort and juggling of the records, the General Council announced that the Churches had voted to approve the plan and that it had decided to proceed without further delay.

In spite of the criticism and manifest disapproval, the General Council continued to urge the issue of union. In 1956 at the Omaha meeting, delegates were elected to meet with a like number from the E. and R. Church to confer on the various phases. This meeting was held the following year in Cleveland and the combined group consummated what was publicized as a union of the two bodies and by such action the United Church of Christ was created.

The Underlying Difference

Any Congregationalist who knows the polity of the Congregational Christian Churches knows that the fellowship as such developed for over three hundred years without a Constitution. None was needed, none was wanted. Congregationalism is not an organic body. Herein lies the fundamental difference between Congregationalism, *a fellowship,* and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, *an organic body;* and herein lies the freedom of which Congregationalism is so justly proud and is so zealously defending. Once this freedom is relinquished, we have given up the principles which our Pilgrim forefathers cherished so dearly and endangered their very lives to protect. Constitutions within certain bodies within the church are necessary and desirable, such as the General Council, the State Conferences, the Missionary Societies, the Associations and the local Churches, but the Fellowship of Congregationalism accepts Christ as its head and needs no governing body.

A Decision Called For

The first draft of the new Constitution provides that each individual Church will be required to signify by vote its desire to affiliate with the United Church. This will be the first opportunity given individual Church members to make a decision, with full knowledge of the issues involved in the union. In making their decision they will have to face the question of whether they are going to continue in The Congregational Way or affiliate with an organic body.

Fortunately there is an answer for those who do not want to see Congregationalism become a matter of history. When the seriousness of the merger became apparent, a faithful group of Congregationalists pledged their support to the continuance of the fellowship. The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches was organized and is continuing Congregationalism as a Free Church Fellowship according to the policies of its founders and those who for over three hundred years have followed what is known as The Congregational Way.

Since the merger became a controversial issue, the General Council, the State Conferences, the Associations and the pastors of individual Churches have discouraged the congregations from studying the various implications of the merger. Church groups, in general, have been presented only with the merits of the union and the Churches have been denied the privilege of having both sides of the case presented with an unbiased attitude.

A Matter of Grave Concern

When the story concerning the United Church of Christ is fully known and Congregationalists are fully aware of the manner in which it was promoted and the changes which must necessarily take place, there will be an awakening among those who have been wondering and waiting to decide which way to go. Having lived and worshipped under the polity of a free church, they are now being asked to give up their name and transfer their church life to one of an entirely different order. This cannot help but be a matter of grave concern to a people who have treasured most the very things they are now being asked to forfeit.

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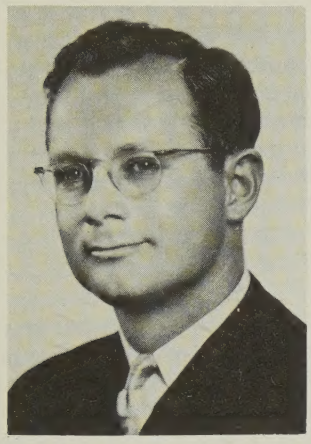
From the Executive Secretary

Rev. Neil H. Swanson, Jr., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Attitudes

As we move closer to the time when Churches will be voting their approval or disapproval of the proposed Constitution of the "United Church of Christ," there will be more opportunities for discussion of the basic issues. I am convinced that most Congregational people will want to see both sides before making such an important decision.



I find that I have two concerns as I contemplate the opportunities for discussion.

On the one hand, I hope that no one on either side will have the attitude of trying to "put over" his point of view. In an issue as basic as this to the future of Congregational Churches, the various concerns and convictions of people on both sides of this controversy should be presented. Everyone should do what he can to guarantee a fair hearing for both sides. Only then can those who vote have an opportunity to make a rational decision.

No Bitterness Wanted

On the other hand, I hope that any spirit of self-righteousness and any attitude of vindictiveness will be at a minimum. Because the issues are so meaningful to many people, it is easy for emotions to become aroused. I remind you that a vindictive spirit can often do more damage for one's cause than can any other single thing. People are repelled by the display of bitterness and do not listen to the reasons for taking a particular stand.

As a matter of fact, I should like to see a series of debates next fall and winter, conducted on a high level of concern to get the issues clearly presented. These debates could be arranged between the most persuasive speakers on each side and could be held at key points in every part of the country. Such debates would do much to bring more adequate understanding to all who must vote on this important proposal.

I call for face-to-face debate. Short of that, I call for pro-and-con discussion. But whatever happens in these coming months, I pray that every meeting may be an exemplification of Christian good will.

A WORD FROM THE PAST

St. Anthony, Minnesota
December 1, 1851

To me it is a sad & a melancholy thought that christians who are one in their faith as are Congl'sts & Presns. should not be able to unite their strength here against the Common enemy; but sad as the present divided State of the two orders is in this Ter., I am fully convinced that it is better for the cause of Christ that we should be thus situated, than that a union should have been formed on the Terms on which alone Presns. here would consent to it. A union by absorption it seems to me is not the union that should anywhere be formed between the two orders. It is far better for the Presns. themselves that their agression should be resisted.

The Rev. Richard Hall, missionary to Minnesota to A. L. Chapin, President of Beloit College and Hall's brother-in-law.

A REQUEST FROM THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Churches and individuals who wish their contributions to the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches and its various projects to be made a matter of record on the books of the Society should draw their remittances to "The Missionary Society" or "Howell D. Davies, Treasurer," and *not* to the projects themselves. Checks to the order of the projects cannot be cashed by the Missionary Society.

Contributions through this Society are of two kinds. Some are made to the General Fund from which the Directors make appropriations for the projects. Others are to the specific projects. In either case, if you will draw your checks to "The Missionary Society," or "Howell D. Davies, Treasurer," it will prevent confusion. Thank you!

THE CONGREGATIONAL WAY

(*continued from page 10*)

At the present time no one knows what the pending court proceedings may contribute to the many important phases of the merger. It is to be hoped that a way can be worked out to bring Congregationalism out of its present chaotic state and preserve it, not only in name but in polity, representing a way of life with a great heritage. The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches points the way.

Congregationalism is now passing through a crisis; however, it was born during a time of crisis and has survived for more than three hundred years. Is it not possible, even probable, that with united effort and dedicated leadership it can be preserved for future generations? Its members are facing the future with deep concern and upon their decision rests the future of Congregationalism. To reject it is to admit that it has failed in its basic principles; to accept it means that its followers still have faith in The Congregational Way.

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FROM THE LETTER BOX

Editor: THE CONGREGATIONALIST

A civil case which will gain more notice in the national press as it is successively appealed to higher courts is that instituted at Oregon City by three members of Atkinson Memorial Congregational Church. The plaintiffs, William Dickman, Harold Salisbury and Lawrence Smelser have challenged the constitutionality of the Oregon textbook law whereby the last legislature instructed local school boards to provide textbooks for parochial schools. It was a friendly suit since three of the five members of the local school board were members of the same church.

The assistance of the American Civil Liberties Union was accepted and this organization provided legal counsel. The principal attorney for the plaintiffs was Dr. Leo Pfeffer of New York who is an eminent authority on church-state relationships. In a brilliant argument before Circuit Judge Ralph Holman on January 8th, Dr. Pfeffer pointed out that textbooks are as integral a part of the teaching process as buildings, desks and teachers themselves and thus the law violates both the first and fourteenth amendments to the U. S. constitution as well as the Oregon constitution.

Among the exhibits presented as evidence was a letter from the priest who is superintendent of the archdiocesan schools in which he stated that the annual gains accruing to the Catholic Church from tax sources are more than ten times the cost to the Church of getting the law passed by the legislature. On the witness stand the writer admitted that he had written the letter.

Dr. Pfeffer pressed the charge that a parochial school is primarily a religious school teaching dogma and catechism through all its courses and while it has a constitutional right to do this it does not have a constitutional right to collect tax moneys for part of its costs.

While the Circuit Court judgment has not yet been decreed, both sides are determined to appeal any decision against them. In the course of time it is expected that the case will reach the U. S. Supreme Court. The American Civil Liberties Union is one of the organizations which is seeking to stem the tide of legislation which is continually being passed by state legislatures due to the pressure of certain groups.

Our Congregational heritage is one of freedom of conscience and for many decades Congregational churches have stood as a bulwark of democracy in preventing breaches in the wall of separation between church and state. It seems, however, that as our churches have become engulfed by authoritarianism many of them have become less concerned about the preservation of our democracy. Perhaps our National Association churches can continue this important witness.

Rev. Horace L. Bachelder

Oregon City, Oregon

Wataga Church Asks Merger Activities Cease

The Wataga Congregational Church, Illinois, at a special meeting on November 22, 1959, adopted the following resolution:

> "Wataga Congregational Church, believing in complete local church government, and being opposed to a national church having a national constitution, requests the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches to withdraw the proposed constitution and cease all activities to bring about the merger of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church into the United Church of Christ."

On receipt of a copy of this resolution from Mrs. Glyn C. Stewart, Clerk of the Wataga Church, Dr. Fred Hoskins, Minister and Secretary of the General Council acknowledged it and said that it would be presented at the next meeting of the Executive Committee and put in the permanent files of the General Council. He added, "You realize, of course, that the constitution which has been presented for study and comment has not been submitted by the General Council but rather by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ."

WILL YOUR GROUP HELP ON THIS?

It has been suggested that women's groups, youth groups, and others among our Churches would like to participate in sending THE CONGREGATIONALIST to various Congregational Churches, ministers, and libraries in other lands. Next month's issue will carry a list of some whom we believe would read it with interest. If you would like to choose one or more names from this list and underwrite the sending of THE CONGREGATIONALIST to them, please notify the Editor. The recipients will be informed as to the names of the persons or organizations sending them the paper. Thus a stronger bond of fellowship will be established with those in far lands who are one with us in the purpose of preserving the "liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

HAVE YOU ANY FRIENDS IN ALASKA?

If you have any friends or acquaintances in Anchorage, Alaska, who would be interested in gathering a Congregational Church in that city, please send their names to Dr. Howell D. Davies, Room 2308, 100 North La Salle Street, Chicago 2, Illinois. Dr. Davies expects to visit Alaska this summer and will confer with all interested people whom he can reach.

If you are sending him any names, it might be well to send them to the Editor also. He will be glad to send copies of THE CONGREGATIONALIST to these people so that they may know something of what the National Association is and what it is doing. Letters direct from people here to friends in Alaska about our work will also help prepare the way for Dr. Davies' visit.